

Academic Regulations Annexe 3A Relating to Assessment Practice and Associated Staff Guidance

The Purpose of Assessment

Assessment allows students to demonstrate their achievement of validated, specified learning outcomes for courses, academic levels, and modules, in line with expectations set by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and other relevant national sector standards (for example, those set within apprenticeship standards or recommended in subject benchmark statements). Qualifications and credit must only be awarded to students who demonstrate the achievement of these learning outcomes.

Each module of study, level of study and award has constructively aligned, interlinked learning outcomes which are the sum of the defined knowledge, skills and behaviours that students can be expected to demonstrate upon completion.

Through the scrupulous, consistent and robust application of national standards and external oversight, assessment, and the processes invoked to confirm its form and standard, supports the comparability of student achievement across the sector and maintains the value of the qualifications both at the point they are awarded and over time. The University's Education Strategy provides an additional framework to contextualise and deliver appropriate assessment standards and strategies.

Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy for the course will be defined and reviewed at validation. The aim of our course design principles is to ensure that courses are well designed, inclusive and provide a high-quality experience for students of the required academic standard. Validation will ensure the appropriateness of the course and the assessment strategy as planned, to enable the achievement of students to be reliably assessed and the achievement of learning outcomes to be demonstrated.

Assessment strategies are designed to be inclusive, appropriate for the qualification, level and module learning outcomes being assessed, be constructively aligned and support students' progression and achievement. Assessment should promote academic integrity and be undertaken securely.

Assessment strategies must enable consistent, equitable, reliable, valid and fair assessment to ensure the appropriate measurement of students' achievement of the intended learning outcomes, at and beyond the threshold level.

The standard, form and process of assessment must also be reasonably comparable with that of other UK providers and aligned with the required national standards including the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

Assessment requirements and processes must be explicit and transparent with clear, accurate and timely information provided for students.

Assessment may constitute:

Assessment of learning: identifies the level and standards of achievement, facilitates the awarding of credit and qualifications, and supports the assurance of academic standards.

Assessment for learning: supports students by providing timely and comprehensible feedback concerning students' achievement of the required outcomes at and beyond the threshold and how their work might be improved.

Assessment as learning: where a balanced and varied assessment strategy develops students' understanding of their strengths and of areas for further development of academic skills when engaging with assessment tasks. This supports the increased independence and maturity of the learner.

Assessment may be formative: it is used both as a tool for tutors to measure student progress and as a benchmark for students to understand the progression of their own learning through receiving and building on feedback from tutors. Students use formative assessment and associated feedback to refine and strengthen their academic performance with regard for threshold standards (defined by the pass mark) and higher levels of achievement. The outcomes of formative assessment are not expressed as final module marks.

Assessment may be summative: it fulfils all the aims of formative assessment and additionally, is designed to indicate the extent of student success in meeting specific learning outcomes and associated volumes of credit at defined levels of the FHEQ. The outcomes of summative assessment are expressed as module/ module component marks. Cumulatively, these may be expressed as outcomes for student progression and/ or student award eligibility and classification.

Summative assessment may be set for components of modules, whole modules or groups of modules.

Assessment and the Achievement of Learning Outcomes

The achievement of module learning outcomes is demonstrated by students' submissions of assessment and completion of examinations (where applicable) and the extent to which they have evidenced the intended learning outcomes. The assessment process and the awarding of marks will measure and grade students' achievement of the intended learning outcomes and academic standards of performance. This will consider the extent to which students' achievement has met or is beyond the required threshold pass standard, in the academic judgement of both internal and external examiners.

The achievement of level learning outcomes is demonstrated by accumulated achievement in modules at that level, to the standards prescribed in **Section 4 of the Academic Regulations: Progression and Award**. Where courses have multiple levels of learning, this allows students to progress through their course of study.

Ultimately, when students have met all the intended level and course learning outcomes, they are able to demonstrate their eligibility for an award of the University. The course learning outcomes are an aggregation and consolidation of the constructively aligned module and level learning outcomes which assessment has tested.

Assessment and Academic Standards

Assessment supports the maintenance of standards and the volume of credit achieved for the award of a qualification and at a level.

Assessment should be proportionate, inclusive, equitable, secure, relevant, and progressive, to support students' learning.

Assessment tasks and a sample of students' assessed performance are reviewed and confirmed as appropriate by examiners external to the University. This provides assurance that standards are set at the appropriate level, are comparable across the sector and support the demonstration of learning outcomes having been met. In addition, this confirmation assures that the mark awarded is appropriate to performance either above, at, or below the threshold level

Regulatory Expectations for Assessment Practice

The following are required elements of our assessment practice:

- A1 We ensure that the academic standards of assessment are rigorous, of comparable standing with the rest of the sector and meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.
(ref: Section 1.3 (d): Principles/ Section 3.2: General Principles of Assessment/ Section 14.3.6: Duties of External Examiners)
- A2 We ensure that all summative assessments are subject to internal scrutiny, approval, and moderation, and where appropriate (i.e. above Level 4 and/ or leading to a recognised H.E. award of the University at Level 4 and above/ and or required by a professional body) are scrutinised by external examiners.
(ref: Section 3.2: General Principles of Assessment / Section 5.2.2: Examination Responsibilities/ Section 5.2.3: Principles on Moderation and Approval of Examination Papers/ Section 14.3.6: Duties of External Examiners)
- A3 We ensure that an agreed sample of submissions (course work) or scripts (examination papers) are sent to the external examiner associated with the assurance of standards of the module concerned, within the parameters described in expectation A2 above.
(ref: Section 5.2.3: General Principles on Moderation and Approval of Examination Papers)
- A4 We ensure assessment is valid, reliable, fair, inclusive, transparent and consistent within and across our courses.
(ref: Section 3.2: General Principles of Assessment)
- A5 We ensure that assessment tasks are marked with regard for the University's agreed marking conventions.
(ref: Section 3.5: Course Assessment)
- A6 We ensure that external examiners see the work of a representative sample of students proposed for each category of award and have appropriate access to all assessed work where practicable. We recognise that external examiners have the right to moderate internal marking.
(ref: Section 3.4: Module Assessment/ Section 14.3.6: Duties of External Examiners)
- A7 We ensure that the form and conduct of reassessment tasks is of a comparable standard to the original assessment task and recognise that the principles of assessment are equally applicable to reassessment.
(ref: Section 3.2: General Principles of Assessment)

General Expectations for Assessment Practice

In addition to the regulatory position summarised in the expectations above, which set the overarching framework for the maintenance of assessment standards, the following operational expectations for the management of assessment practice were considered and endorsed by the Regulatory Review group established in 2019/20 to review and advise on assessment practice. These expectations are important to the maintenance of excellent assessment practice and exemption from these should be sought from Quality Assurance Services, only by exception, and accompanied by a clear rationale for the exemption:

- B1 Each summative assessment task should be accompanied by an assessment brief accessible to students, tutors and external examiners and which includes the following information:
- i) a description of the task (which may include a word count or length);
 - ii) the intended learning outcomes;
 - iii) referencing style/requirements;
 - iv) marking criteria and grade descriptors;
 - v) the mode of feedback.
- B2 An internal verification process is required for all summative assessment/ reassessment tasks and is undertaken by at least one member of academic staff of appropriate experience, preferably from outside the module team. The purpose of the verification process is to confirm the appropriateness of both the task and the associated marking scheme with due regard for expectations A1, A2, A4 and A5.
- B3 External examiners will scrutinise the standard and form of summative assessment/ reassessment tasks which lead to the award of credit and/ or qualifications described in A2 above. If a sampling approach to approval is being followed, external examiners must approve at least one summative assessment task for each module concerned. Confirmation of this will be required through the submission of the external examiners report. Both of these activities are undertaken prior to the release of the assessment tasks to students.
- B4 The marks for each component of assessment/ reassessment are internally moderated in alignment with the parameters described in A2 above. Where assessment does not require a written submission, the record of the assessment outcome concerned (in whatever form that is captured) should form the basis of the moderation process and should support a moderation process.

- B5 Where a team of tutors is marking the same assessment, or assessments are being second marked, the tutors should meet early in the assessment process to ensure consistency of approach. Additionally, one or more members of that team should have appropriate experience of subject standards across the sector (e.g. through external examining appointments or participation in sector recognised subject calibration processes) to support appropriate calibration of performance standards.
- B6 The internal moderation of assessment submissions may be undertaken based on the same sample size articulated for external moderation purposes. Both internal and, where applicable, external moderators may request additional/ all submissions to review.
- B7 Any concerns relating to the standard of student performance highlighted through the moderation process should be brought to the attention of the module leader for further action (e.g. the potential amendment of cohort marks up or down).

Supporting Resources

University guidance and resources are available to support the delivery of these expectations: Institutional guidance on inclusive practice, inclusive assessment and sample sizes etc.:

www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/staffsite/-/media/files/staff-site/quality-assurance/key-information/validation/inclusive-assessment-guide-final.pdf

General development resources for excellent assessment practice and access to the Inclusive Course Design Tool:

www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/teachlearn

www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/teachlearn/learning-and-teaching-guidance/inclusive-practice

www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/clt/inclusive-assessment-guide-feb-2022-pdf

www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/teachlearn/excellent-academic-practice/how-to-build-learning-pathways-through-your-course/feedback

Undergraduate and Postgraduate marking descriptors can be located:

<https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/clt/undergraduate-marking-descriptors---july-2023-pdf.pdf>

<https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/clt/postgraduate-marking-descriptors---feb-2022-pdf.pdf>

Further information on can be located:

<https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/teachlearn/excellent-academic-practice/how-to-build-learning-pathways-through-your-course/assessment/>

The External Examiners' Handbook (which also includes a list of key Course Director responsibilities):

www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/our-university/public-information/external-examiners

The University is also implementing the Advance HE examiners training programme for the professional development of staff members who have assessment and examining roles/responsibilities. The purpose of the programme is to provide strengthened assurance of degree standards across the UK Higher Education sector. More information concerning the programme is available at the following link: www.advance-he.ac.uk/degree-standards-project.

Additional external guidance and resources relating to assessment protocols for the maintenance of academic standards are available at the following links:

www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/assessment

www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/external-expertise

www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks

www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements

www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/external-examining